

Gozler-Meem-Brown House
3412 O Street N.W.
(Georgetown)
Washington
District of Columbia

HABS No. DC-204

HABS,
DC,
GEO,
140-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

GOSZLER-MEEM-BROWN HOUSE

Location: 3412 O Street, N.W. (Georgetown), Washington, D.C.

Present Owner: Dr. and Mrs. Marvin L. Fair (1969)

Present Occupants: Rental tenants (1969)

Present Use: Residence (1969)

Significance: This is an early example of the small brick houses built for investment purposes in western Georgetown. It demonstrates the adaptability of these structures to twentieth-century patterns of living.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of Erection: ca. 1820-1830. There is no indication in tax records of 1818 of any structure on this site. A deed in 1831 describes a "...two story brick dwelling ... and other tenements" on part of Lots 65 and 66. Presumably, this structure was one of the tenements, the present 3414 O Street was another, and 1328 34th Street was the two story brick dwelling.
2. Architect: None known.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The building is located in Square 1228, Lot 315 (formerly Square 58, part of Lots 65 and 66 in Beatty and Hawkins Addition to Georgetown). O Street was originally called Second Street. The following is an incomplete chain of title to the land on which the structure stands. Reference is to the office of the Recorder of Deeds, Washington, D.C.

1810

Thomas Beatty
to
John Goszler

Deed July 6, 1810
Recorded July 21, 1810
Liber X-23, folio 382

Lot 66

1823

John Goszler
to
William King, Jr.
James Calder & Son
to
Samuel Smoot

Deed of Trust November 29,
1823, Recorded April 27,
1824, Liber W.B. 3, folio
462

Part of Lot 65

1831

John Goszler and
wife, Elizabeth
to
Farmers and Mechanics
Bank of Georgetown

Deed September 21, 1831
Recorded March 19, 1832
Liber W.B. 40, folio 117

Parts of Lots 65 and 66 "...with a two story brick dwelling" (now 1328 34th Street) "and other tenements..." (now 3412 and 3414 O Street). Goszler owed the bank a large sum of money on a judgement rendered in 1818. Judgement was levied on parts of Lots 65 and 66, and at public sale, the property was purchased by the bank.

1843

Farmers and Mechanics
Bank of Georgetown
to
George A. Meem

Deed October 7, 1843
Recorded May 4, 1847
Liber W.B. 134, folio 50

Lots 65 and 66 for \$3300

1865

George A. Meem and
wife, Martha
to
Daniel Brown

Deed August 29, 1865
Recorded August 30, 1865
Liber NCT 62, folio 289

Part of Lots 65 and 66 (present Lot 815) for \$1800

1930

Mary Ellen Brown,
sole surviving heir-
at-law of Daniel Brown
and wife, Johanna
to
George M. Hostetler and
wife, Alice W.

Deed October 13, 1930
recorded October 25, 1930
Liber 6496, folio 257

1959

Alice W. Mostatler,
surviving widow,
tenant by entirety
of her husband,
George M.

Dead November 13, 1959
Recorded December 3, 1959
Liber 11351, folio 403

to

Marvin L. Fair and
wife, Rachel,
tenants by entirety

4. Alterations and additions: The interior was renovated in 1930 and modern heating and plumbing were added. The second floor bedroom appears to be an addition. Basement window are twentieth century additions.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

Tax records in 1815 and 1818 assess Goszler's property for ten feet of Lot 65 and all of Lot 66 with a two-story brick house at \$3,000. (Record Group 351, National Archives, Assessment of Real and Personal Property Roll 10, Roll 11) this high figure would seem to indicate a rather large house, most likely present 1328 34th Street on the southeast corner of 34th and O Streets (formerly Frederick and Second Streets).

John Goszler came of an illustrious family who left Germany in the mid-eighteenth century, many of the Goszler family settled in Pennsylvania. (Census Records, Bucks County, Pennsylvania). Others settled in the western part of Georgetown, acquired considerable property there and participated in community affairs. Georgetown Tax Records for the period 1800-1808 show four Goszlers--Anthony, Henry, John and George.

In 1818 John Goszler used some of his property as security to borrow money from the Farmers and Mechanics Bank. In 1823, caught in the financial pinch that had struck Georgetown, he was forced to mortgage part of his property, Lot 65, to meet his financial obligations. At this time he was employed as a Liquor Gauger with responsibility for measuring the contents of liquor casks for taxation purposes.

Goszler could not meet his obligations, and in 1831 a public sale was held to dispose of some of his property, among which were parts of Lots 65 and 66, "...with a two story brick dwelling..." (now 1328 34th Street) "...and other tenements" (now 3412 and 3414 O Street).

The Farmers and Mechanics Bank was the highest bidder at the public sale and so retained the property. Although the property was owned by the bank, John Goszler continued to live in the two-story brick dwelling on the corner of Frederick and Second Streets on the south side. Several other Goszlers lived and ran businesses nearby; and it is probable that Catherine Goszler, who is listed in the 1830 Georgetown Directory as "spinster, Second street near Frederick" lived in one of the tenement houses, as did Mrs. Polly Goszler, who is in the 1834 Directory as "widow, Second street." (City Directory)

George A. Meem who bought the property in 1843, was a prosperous carpenter. He moved into the large brick house on the corner and sold the adjoining house, fronting on Second Street (now O) to Isaac Barrett, whose son was married to George's daughter, Ann. The two families remained close, even after Ann was widowed and had remarried, for in 1858 "Barrett and Meem" was a carpentry firm at 18 Prospect Street. (City Directory)

It is not known who occupied Meem's tenement houses, including the present 3412 O Street. Daniel Brown, a grocer whose business and home were both at 54 Fayette (35th) Street, bought 3412 O Street in 1865. He died shortly after purchasing the house. Before his death Brown had amassed considerable property in Georgetown. His widow and three children continued to live at 54 Fayette Street until 1879, when they moved to 3412 O Street continued to be used as a rental property during the Brown ownership. (City Directories)

In October 1930 Mary Ellen Brown, sole surviving heir-at-law --all other children and heirs having died intestate and childless--sold the property to George M. Hostetler and his wife, Alice W. Mr. Hostetler, an architect and builder, remodelled the run-down house and installed plumbing for the first time. (City Directory, Interview with Mrs. George Hostetler).

The Hostetlers lived in the house only a few years. After Mr. Hostetler's death, his widow moved and used the house for rental purposes. During the World War II the British Embassy rented the house and used it for transients.

In November 1959 the house was purchased by Dr. and Mrs. Marvin L. Fair, the present owners, who occupied it through 1968. While undertaking comprehensive repairs on the house, the Fairs restored many of its original features.

C. Bibliography:

a. Primary and unpublished sources:

Census Records. Bucks County, Pennsylvania, 1790. Interview with Mrs. George Hostetler, September, 1968. Record Group 351, National Archives, Records of the City of Georgetown, D.C., 1800-1879; Assessment of Real and Personal Property, Microcopy 605, Roll 1 (1800-1808); Roll 10 (1815); Roll 11 (1818-1819).

b. Secondary and published sources:

City Directories: The Washington Directory, 1830, p. 7. For 1834 A Full Directory for Washington City, Georgetown and Alexandria, p. 8 Boyd's Washington and Georgetown Directory, 1858, p. 431; 1865, p. 376; 1866, p. 406. Boyd's Directory of the District of Columbia, Boyd's District of Columbia Directory, 1931, p. 838; 1932, p. 818.

Prepared by Volunteers
for the Commission of
Fine Arts
Washington, D.C.
1969

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: A typical small two-story Georgetown house which appears smaller than most because of its lower-than-average ceilings, its low sidewalk-to-first-floor relationship, and its lack of a front yard.
2. Condition of Fabric: Good; fairly well-maintained, except rear weatherboarding which is badly in need of painting. Interior condition very good. (1969)

B. Description of Exterior

1. Overall dimensions: Approximately 18' - 0" by 29' - 6". Three bays across O Street facade. Two stories high. Second floor rear bedroom appears to be an addition: there is a cold joint in the masonry on the second floor level of the east elevation. As the site drops sharply from north to south, rear elevation is three stories high.
2. Foundations: Brick.

3. Wall construction: Brick, painted; rear wall weatherboarded.
4. Chimneys: Two on west side (one relined).
5. Openings:
 - a. Doors and doorways: Front door is twentieth-century "Colonial" raised-panel door with glazed round-headed panels in the top; door casing is composition moulding over wood, badly in need of paint. (1968)
 - b. Windows and shutters: First floor front sash are nine-over-six-light double hung wood; second floor front and all rear sash are six-over-six-light double hung wood. Small casements of wood and metal in the east wall of the basement are mid-twentieth century additions. Raised panel shutters on front windows are also recent replacements, although sash and glass appear to be old.
6. Roof:
 - a. Shape and covering: Gable roof with ridge running north south; metal covering.
 - b. Framing: Wood.
 - c. Cornice: One projected brick course with hanging metal gutter.

C. Description of Interior

1. Floor plan:
 - a. First floor: Entry hall in northeast corner; living room across remainder of front; large sitting room across rear with stairway at east end, fireplace at west end, and large opening to living room on north.
 - b. Second floor: Bathroom (1930 addition) in northeast corner; two bedrooms with closets between on west side. Rear bedroom is one step lower.
 - c. Basement: Sitting room across rear, kitchen in northeast corner and heating/utility room in northwest corner.

2. Stairways: Straight run with winders at foot, from basement to first to second floors. Lower run has old rail and newel, probably from another house; upper run has no rail, but has ornamental scrolled brackets of wood or composition probably from elsewhere.
3. Flooring: Random width pine on first and second floors, resilient tile in basement sitting room, carpet in kitchen.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Painted plaster, and moulded tongue and groove vertical boarding.
5. Doors and doorways: Front entry and hall closet have twentieth-century mahogany raised panel doors, door to basement stair is batten type made of moulded tongue and groove boarding; upstairs are simple early nineteenth-century four-panel doors, some relocated.
6. Decorative features and trim: Mantels have been removed and replaced with simple surround moulding in board-panelled chimney breasts on first floor, second floor front has early mantel with moulded surround and shelf support. Shelf itself is replacement. Door and window trim throughout is simple 1 1/2" quarter-round with small square fillet. Base in some rooms is simple beaded board, in others plain board with cap mouldings.
7. Hardware: Dates from 1930 renovation; plain brass knobs and escutcheons. Traces of rimlocks on second-floor doors.
8. Heating: Radiators. Two working fireplaces, two not properly relined.

D. Site

1. General setting and orientation: One of several smaller houses on the south side of O Street, this house has no front yard, but an ample rear yard reached by a three-foot wide alley on the east side.
2. Enclosures: Brick wall across rear of lot; wood pailing fence on sides of rear yard; board gate at O Street entrance to alley.
3. Walks; Brick, Concrete.
4. Landscaping: Rear yard has perimeter planting around center lawn.

Prepared by The Office of
Walter G. Peter, Jr., AIA
Architect
October 30, 1968

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

These records were prepared as part of a project to record structures in the western part of the Georgetown Historic District in Washington, D.C. The project was conducted by the Commission of Fine Arts with the cooperation of the Historic American Buildings Survey. The resulting documentation was donated to HABS by the Commission and published in 1970 in HABS Selections Number 6, "Georgetown Architecture - Northwest: Northwest Washington, District of Columbia". Research for the project was conducted by volunteers under the supervision of Ms. Nancy Black, staff member of the Commission of Fine Arts. Architectural information was prepared by The Office of Walter G. Peter, AIA. The photographs were taken by J. Alexander. The data was edited and prepared for transmittal to the Library of Congress by HABS architectural historian Emily J. Harris in 1979.